TRANSCRIPT—BETTY CAMERON

Interviewee: Betty Cameron

Interviewer: Ruth Ehrlich and Sandra Jackson

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Abstract: Betty Cameron discusses her education, career as a regional manager for Terminix, and family history in Fairview going back to her grandfather, Fletcher McBrayer.

Ruth Ehrlich: Today is May the sixth. This is Ruth Ehrlich and Sandra Jackson. We are at the home of Betty Cameron doing an interview for the Fairview History Project. So, we're going to get started. Betty, what we'd like to ask at first, if we just get some demographics. Can you tell us your, or will you tell us your birthdate?

Betty Cameron: That's terrible. May 21st, 1930.

RE: You got a birthday coming up. Where were you born, Betty?

BC: I was born here.

RE: Here, in Fairview?

BC: Mm-hmm.

RE: At the hospital or where?

BC: Gosh, I can remember my mother being at the hospital with one daughter, but I'm not sure.

RE: Not sure where you were born?

BC: It could have been at home, I don't know.

RE: Yeah, never heard mom mention it?

BC: No.

RE: Okay.

BC: Yes, I'm sure we've talked about it all a thousand times, but I think I was born probably at home.

RE: Okay.

BC: I think the older girl was born at Biltmore Hospital.

RE: Were you married?

BC: No.

RE: Or are you married? Never been married?

BC: No.

RE: Okay. Then, you're an independent woman, aren't you?

BC: Well, busy.

RE: No children. So, no children?

BC: No.

RE: Where did you go to school? Tell us about your education.

BC: I went to school at Fairview Elementary and so on. At that time, it was high school also.

RE: Was it? I don't know that I've heard that.

BC: I graduated from there, valedictorian.

RE: Look at you, girl.

BC: My older sister was at Appalachian, the Appalachian State Teachers College. From there, I went to Chapel Hill at the university.

RE: So, you went to Appalachian State?

BC: First, yeah.

RE: How long were you there?

BC: Well, anyway, I did the whole four years, but I went on to Chapel Hill.

RE: What did you major in?

BC: I majored in political science and sociology. I'm a political bird.

RE: What did you plan to do with that when you majored in political science and sociology?

BC: You know, I didn't really know. I had a lot of offers. I took a job managing Terminix International, and I ran a whole region. We used to beat them all over the country. In Arizona, those guys would say, "Our motto this spring is beat Betty Cameron." We just had a wonderful company.

RE: When did you graduate from UNC?

BC: Oh, I'm not sure.

RE: Chapel Hill. You don't remember?

BC: I'm not sure. No.

RE: Okay. So, you went straight to Terminix from college?

BC: No, no. I went to... Yeah, from college. Sure.

RE: You were running a region straight out of college?

BC: Yeah.

RE: You go, girl.

BC: I was the only woman and they just thought that was unreal. Oh, I had the greatest employees. I had an 18-county territory.

RE: Wow.

BC: I buried them all.

RE: You go, girl. How long were you at Terminix?

BC: Oh my God, I retired.

RE: So, you never worked any place else, Betty?

BC: Oh, I worked all through school here and there, but no.

RE: Wow.

BC: I got regional manager and, my God, I was on profit sharing and everything else.

RE: So how long did you work at Terminix?

BC: Oh, I'd say, 30 years. Long enough to retire. Yeah.

RE: 30. Wow, that is amazing. So, one job.

BC: They had never had a regional manager or a manager as a woman. I really, really did very well because it was profit sharing and I had the great... These people still come to see me that worked with me because they were very successful, too.

RE: Wow. So good leadership starts at the top.

BC: Well, you know, it's not all brains. It's how you treat people.

RE: That is so very true.

BC: Brains don't get you very far if you're nasty. If you love people, it's...

RE: And respectful, makes all the difference in the world, doesn't it? Every one of us has a talent...

BC: You know the old saying, "They don't want to know how much you know, they want to know how much you care." I cared very deeply about people.

RE: That's amazing.

BC: I was just loved. People mean everything to me.

RE: That is great. Now, you were born here in Fairview.

BC: Yes.

RE: Tell us about who were... You said you all owned a lot of property. So how far back do your family roots go here in Fairview? Was it your parents' parents? Was it your...

BC: My grandparents, Fletcher McBrayer was a young man who was all over the area. I always admired him so much because I felt like he thought like I did.

RE: Now, who was Fletcher?

BC: He was my grandfather.

RE: Grandfather. Fletcher, what did you say his name was?

BC: Fletcher McBrayer.

RE: Spell his last name.

BC: M-small c-B-R-A-Y-E-R. They're all around here still, the McBrayers.

RE: He was your grandfather. Okay. So now tell us about your grandfather. What were you telling us about that?

BC: My grandfather would, as a young man, he covered everything. If it was Rutherford County or Shelby, he owned houses everywhere. He was just so sharp. When he was so young, he'd go when they were bidding and they'd say, "Mr. McBrayer, you know this is cash?" He said, "Just keep on bidding." He owned land everywhere.

RE: So, he bought land initially here in Fairview?

BC: Oh yes. All of this was owned all the way to the top of the rock cliffs, the rocky point over there that crosses over to Brush Creek and the middle pasture and all the way in this direction as far as you can see.

Sandra Jackson: Did they live in that house over there? The McBrayer house over [inaudible]

BC: Yes, but I lived in it too.

SJ: Okay.

BC: Yeah. Growing up.

RE: So, you, so [inaudible] he bought all this property?

BC: Yeah.

RE: That was your grandfather?

BC: He was just a go-getter. Everything he touched, my mother used to say he'd turned to gold. He sat up there under the crab apple tree and whittled. I'm sure he was thinking.

RE: How about that? How about that? So, then your dad was born here then too?

BC: No, my dad was born in Wilmington.

RE: In Wilmington.

BC: Came here. Oh, he was in World War I with Uncle Charlie, the man who lived across over in the other house over there.

RE: You said this was your grandfather. Was McBrayer your mama's dad?

BC: Yes.

RE: Your mama's dad. Okay.

BC: Then my father met Charlie McBrayer in World War I and he came to visit. That's how he ended up... They were so close.

RE: So, did he meet your mom then?

BC: Yes.

RE: What was your mom's maiden name?

BC: Octavia McBrayer.

RE: Octavia McBrayer.

BC: You wouldn't believe her name. Octavia Bell Vina Matilda Louisa Jane.

RE: No.

BC: Yes.

RE: Do that again. A little slower.

BC: Can you believe anybody would do that to a girl?

RE: Do that a little slower. Octavia.

BC: I don't think I should. My mother would turn over in her grave.

RE: Come on. Let's do it again. Octavia.

BC: Octavia Bell Vina Matilda Louisa Jane. She was named after all these relatives.

RE: How many names did she have?

BC: From here to Rutherford County.

RE: How many was that? Octavia.

BC: Bell.

RE: Bell.

BC: Vina Matilda.

RE: Vina. Is that one?

BC: That's two names.

RE: Vina Matilda.

BC: Louisa Jane.

RE: Louisa Jane.

BC: I've never seen it written.

RE: That's six names.

BC: My mother would've killed anybody that wrote it down.

RE: Then her last name.

BC: She'd killed me now for talking.

RE: We won't let her know. We won't tell her. So, she had seven names before she was even married.

BC: Okay. Yeah.

RE: Then when she got married, she married whom?

BC: A Cameron.

RE: What was his name?

BC: William.

RE: William Cameron. Wow. That's one for the records. That's a great one. Okay.

BC: The McBrayers own all the land as far as you can see. We gave that church, my grandfather did, at Pleasant Grove and the church and the land and everything.

RE: Wow.

BC: He just... A very successful person.

RE: So, your mom and dad were here then?

BC: Yeah. My mother called me Fletcher. She said, "What do we do next, Fletcher?"

RE: Why'd she call you Fletcher?

BC: After her father because he was such a pusher and go-getter. I was always working, always doing something.

RE: Now did you have brothers and sisters?

BC: Had two sisters.

RE: Who are they?

BC: They're both deceased. Ann and Lucille. Lucille was the oldest.

RE: Which one were you?

BC: I was in the middle.

RE: You were in the middle? How about that?

BC: They say that's not the best place to be.

RE: Well, were they go-getters like you are?

BC: Oh, they did all right. I ended up paying off everybody's mortgage.

RE: Did you really?

BC: Yeah, every piece of land. Everything they ever did.

RE: Wow.

BC: I was very fortunate to secure the job I had and to be on profits. When you're working and you're on profits, if you've got any kind of a company and any kind of a brain, it should do fine.

RE: So, where did your mom and dad live?

BC: We lived in the big house.

RE: In the big house.

BC: I built this little house for a housekeeper because I traveled a lot in business. I'd go to Europe and management meetings and so on. I just wanted somebody here, maybe a woman because I had people living around. Oh, I had a 40-stall barn right there that burned, a horse barn and 40 stalls and a training barn and everything. It burned.

SJ: How long ago was that?

RE: Yeah.

SJ: Not long ago.

BC: Not a long time ago.

SJ: I remember that.

BC: It was on TV.

SJ: Yeah.

BC: You remember?

SJ: I remember that.

BC: It was huge.

RE: Now you had a 40-stall barn. So, did you raise horses?

BC: Oh yes.

RE: So, you did that?

BC: I had cattle and horses and everything.

RE: You have got to tell us about this now. Let's go back to your mom and dad. Y'all lived here. You lived in the big house. Where was the big house?

BC: It's still there. The big house right there.

RE: What's the address of the big house.

BC: It's really my address. 1957 Charlotte Highway.

RE: Okay, so you live right there?

BC: Yeah.

RE: Okay. That's where you were born and raised?

BC: Yeah.

RE: How about that?

SJ: Who did her sisters marry, too?

RE: Who did your sisters marry? Ann and... Was it Louise?

BC: Ann married a Jordan and then she married a Gilreath. She is deceased and so is Lucille.

RE: Did Lucille get married?

BC: Yeah.

RE: Who did Lucille marry?

BC: I was just trying to think. It's been so long. She's the oldest.

SJ: The Gilreaths still live right through here, right?

BC: Huh?

SJ: Did the Gilreaths... They lived right in here too, didn't they?

BC: Well, Anne had married a Gilreath that worked in this area, this general area down here. She married a Gilreath first, one of them. I'm not aware of any other Gilreaths that live here.

SJ: Well, that's what I mean. She lived right in here, didn't she? I knew a Gilreath.

BC: Oh, did you?

SJ: Once upon the time.

BC: I don't guess Ann ever lived here. I would say that Ann lived on that hill over there, that you came up. All this land and everything is part of ours.

RE: So now you were born here in Fairview and grew up here in Fairview. As a little girl, what kind of things did you do? Did you all have a farm? You talked about horses. When you were a little girl...

BC: I worked as hard as a suck egg dog. I tell you, but I want you to know it was by choice.

RE: Okay. What did you do when you say you worked hard?

BC: Oh, I did everything.

RE: You were a little girl? What did you do?

BC: Oh my gosh, I did a little bit of everything.

RE: Tell us about it.

BC: My dad... He died, I think rather early. I just wanted to be everywhere he was, I don't care what he was doing. If he was pulling a limb, I was pulling part of it. I just, it's great people.

RE: So, you worked alongside dad. Did you ever play?

BC: Oh, yes. Oh my gosh.

RE: Yeah, tell us.

BC: I was on a basketball team and everything else.

RE: Were you?

BC: Yeah.

RE: You say everything else. What's everything else?

BC: Well, I played volleyball and every sport in the world at Chapel Hill and at Fairview and was on First Team. So was my sister, my older sister.

RE: When you were at home, did y'all have a garden? Did you have farm animals?

BC: Oh, yes.

RE: Tell us about home life when you were a little girl.

BC: Oh, home life was very special. A lot of work. We had tenants and we had people who worked. Then I didn't build a barn until later. I've always got the big idea and overdo everything. So, I'm the crazy one that built the 40-stall barn.

RE: Well, when you said you had people that worked when you were growing up, were these people like locals or were they [inaudible]

BC: They might not be. I'll tell you an example. There's a big lattice porch over there and two arched entries. I worried about everybody, if they were working too hard or if they were being taken care of. So, I always checked on them. If they came in to eat... I remember this one old guy would lay down on the porch and let his legs hang off, and I'd worry about him and I'd go down and lay beside him and ask him if he was all right.

RE: How old were you when you were doing it?

BC: I was little. I was young.

RE: You were worried about their well-being?

BC: I was worried about him, yeah. I was afraid he'd work too hard.

RE: Were these white folks?

BC: Yes. Yeah. Oh my gosh, we had such a wonderful life. My dear Emma Lou. Did you ever know any Edgertons?

RE: I didn't, but I'm new to this area. Sandra's the one who has all the history.

BC: Yeah, Emma Lou worked... Lou Emma. We called her Emma Lou. She always worked for my mother. When my mother died, she was the first one at the back door with her apron ready to... As old as she was.

RE: How about that?

BC: She was a wonderful woman. I wonder what I wanted to tell you about. Oh, she went to work and she had a ton of little black children and we really loved them, even though I really gave them a hard time about the negro weddings. I didn't know it was bad to do that at that time.

RE: Sure. Well, things were different back in those days.

BC: We were always laughing. We were just big buddies. She was always there and she was always there for me till she was gone.

RE: Now you say she worked for your mama. Did she reside in your house or did she come in your home?

BC: No, she came and went. She had a bunch of little children. She'd leave them on the warm hearth and go to work.

RE: Would she?

BC: She had a sorry husband. Ellard wasn't too industrious.

RE: What about the other workers out there that were helping your dad?

BC: Oh, the one that they couldn't believe that I was so worried about was Harvey Chancey. He seemed old. When he would lay down on the porch in the sun at lunchtime and put his feet out, I would go and sit beside him to see if he was all right.

RE: Did y'all prepare lunch for them? Is that what you did?

BC: Oh, yeah.

RE: Then that brought them in for lunch?

BC: Yeah, we always did.

RE: That was great. How many people do you think? Do you remember how many people you had there?

BC: Oh, I don't know. Depending on the time of year, because we had a lot of cattle and everything and things changed over the years and they were just always there.

RE: Were they working livestock or did you all have a garden?

BC: Oh, we had everything. We planted everything from corn to the work the top of the mountain in timber or whatever.

RE: Wow. What did y'all do with your garden vegetables? Did you can them?

BC: Can them. Yeah.

RE: Did you can them?

BC: I guess we were one of the first people and that old freezer is still down in the barn. It was long and we'd fill that thing up. I think we were the first people that ever had a freezer, but they were huge.

RE: Did you slaughter your cattle? Did you have pigs and cattle?

BC: Yeah, we had pigs and cattle.

RE: Did you slaughter them?

BC: I didn't have anything to do with that. I'm not a killer and I couldn't stand it. Even if my dad shot a hog, it'd kill me. I would go and shut my ears and hide somewhere.

RE: So what else did you do to keep busy? You said you hung around with your dad. Did you ride horses when you were a little girl?

BC: Oh, from the time he put me on the first one.

RE: Did you have a favorite?

BC: Oh, we had so many. As I told you, at one time, I had a 40-stall horse barn.

RE: Yeah. When did you build that horse barn? You said you did that on your own.

BC: I built that horse barn after I came back here. I have no idea what year, but it was there a long time. I think somebody did something because it was a perfect barn.

RE: So, you said that you grew up, you went to college, you worked at Terminix. You said you came back. Where had you been when you came back and built the barn?

BC: Well, I didn't build the barn and everything until I was working and managing Terminix and everything. I was just trying to think. I even worked summers besides working here.

SJ: So, you were talking about when you came back from college and you started working at Terminix.

BC: Yes.

SJ: It was when you came back.

BC: Yeah.

RE: Okay.

SJ: So, you worked in Terminix here in Asheville.

BC: Oh yes. The whole region. 18 counties.

SJ: Yeah.

RE: That's great. Now, when you built that barn...

BC: Shelby and all Cleveland County and everything was part of my territory.

RE: When you built that barn, did you do the horse training and riding lessons?

BC: No.

RE: You hired somebody to do that?

BC: Mm-hmm.

RE: What was offered at that barn?

BC: Well, we had a horse training and we showed horses. Oh, we had beautiful horses. Those black that just shine when they were ready for the show and everything. It was a big deal.

RE: Was that B &B stable?

BC: Yes.

RE: Why was it B&B stables? What was B&B?

BC: That was my dear love that died later. Bruce and Betty. It's B&B and we named the road.

RE: Bruce and Betty were whom?

BC: That's me and...

RE: Some guy she liked.

BC: The guy that I loved that... He died of lung cancer early.

RE: Oh. So, is that why you never married?

BC: I'm sure, but I've just been busy.

RE: Now, Betty, you've seen a lot change about Fairview. Did you ever have any impact from any of the natural disasters? I understand when we talk to other people that there's actually been a couple of floods around here. Were you all ever impacted by the flooding?

BC: No, we really weren't. The most I was ever impacted by the flooding was worrying about. I put a lake down there below and it's still there at the creek. I was afraid the creek was going to ruin my lake. What bothered me was when I was growing up, we had this little white dog called Daisy. She was so beautiful. She was a Spitz. My dad was an animal lover. My dad was the sweetest person in the world and she had puppies in that bank on that creek. And he went and drug the puppies out and brought them and everything so they wouldn't maybe get drowned or fall in. That creek, if it was flooding, it would be almost as high as the banks in the garden down there below the barn.

RE: Did y'all ever lose crops as a result of the flooding?

BC: Oh, I'm sure we had damaged crops, but I don't remember anything specifically. We owned bottoms across the road that we tended. Those creeks would just be huge. Course that creek starts... They start back here and sort of wind around.

RE: That's great. So, you were never really devastated.

BC: I just think we were a little bit high for that. Most I worried about was those dogs.

RE: But those puppies survived.

BC: Those puppies, oh yes. Daddy would always take care of... He had a heart of gold. He would take care of that for me. If I had a question or if I was worried about anything, daddy would take care of it.

RE: Was daddy still here when you came back from college?

BC: Oh yes. I was daddy's girl.

RE: Uh huh. Yeah, it was a big loss when you lost dad, wasn't it?

BC: Oh, yeah.

RE: Yeah. Where did you all go to...

BC: But mom too.

RE: Yes. Mom's special as dad?

BC: Oh, very. They were wonderful.

RE: And who was mom? What was her name again?

BC: McBrayer.

RE: What was her first name?

BC: Octavia.

RE: Octavia. Yeah. Was it Octavia that had that long, long, long name?

BC: Yeah.

RE: Octavia plus six.

BC: Yeah. I wonder if that was a joke, but I don't think so. That was her name, she said. I don't know who was crazy enough to name her that. I didn't know her mother, was Sarah. She was a diminutive type little lady. She probably didn't have much to say into the world. She was one of those kind back then that wasn't like us.

RE: She said it all on her birth certificate.

BC: We were out conquering the world. She was just taking care of her homestead.

RE: Right. Bless her heart. Yeah. Bless her heart.

BC: She must have been a wonderful person. I didn't know her.

RE: Yeah.

BC: My mother thought she was gold.

RE: Well, it sounds like you had a couple real special parents.

BC: Oh yes.

RE: Yeah. So, when you all were growing up, did y'all go to a church somewhere around here? Were you affiliated with a church?

BC: We went Fairview Baptist some and Pleasant Grove. My mother liked Fairview Baptist. Yeah.

RE: Yeah. We talked to somebody the other day who was a real big part of Fairview Baptist. Been part of her life, big time.

BC: Oh really?

RE: So, yeah. Yeah.

BC: I'm not very good at maintaining the... I do mine a lot in private.

RE: Now did your family own where Fairview Baptist is? I know where Pleasant Grove is and they owned over there.

BC: Yeah, they owned as far as you could see those mountains over there. No.

RE: No. Didn't own where Fairview Baptist is? Pleasant Grove, they owned that and you said donated the property to the church.

BC: Everything there and the graveyard and all of it. Yeah.

RE: That is so good.

BC: Then even the mountains behind it, my grandfather owned as far as you could see. He even owned property in Greenville and down Shelby and Rutherford County. He was a go-getter.

RE: Sounds like he was. I think he got it [inaudible]

BC: That's why my mother always said, "Fletcher, what do we do next?"

RE: That's great.

BC: She thought I was a pusher too.

RE: Well, it sounds like you might have been. Were you?

BC: Yeah, I think I was.

RE: Yeah. So, it's hard when you get caught down, doesn't it? Yeah. Yeah. Did you ever have any major health issues or any of your family have major health issues when y'all were growing up?

BC: Not really. My father died very suddenly and my mother. We were very healthy.

RE: Very good, very good. Where would the hospital have been? Would you have gone to the...

BC: Dr. Lynch? Do you know Susie Hamilton?

RE: I don't.

SJ: It's Annie's sister.

RE: Annie's sister, okay.

BC: Oh, do you know her? You know what's happening?

SJ: Yeah.

BC: Hello? Hi, Anne. No, I have some people here that I was trying to give some information, but it's so good to hear from you. How are you? Wait a minute. I don't know why you faded from the... What did you say? Oh, you're kidding. It hasn't been...

(pause)

RE: Yeah.

BC: Real well. They live up in sort of the wooded area that used to be our land. When my relatives came in after my parents died, they just sold everything.

RE: Now who was it doing the selling?

BC: My sisters.

RE: Your sisters.

BC: I bought it all back. Now they live in my house and so on. They're both dead, but their relatives do. This house up here is mine.

RE: Yeah. When you said your sister's house, that was your sister's house. Was your sister's house. I mean, that's how you referred to it because you don't have a sister living now, right?

BC: No. No. Right. This house back here, it got built in the middle of all that selling and I just bought it all back.

RE: Who did the designing of the homes that you all had built?

BC: I don't know how much I had to do with this one. A good bit. Some great people live in it.

RE: Now, when your family was living in this original house, the big house, we'll call it...

BC: Right there.

RE: When you were living there, was it built the way it is today or was it added onto or renovated?

BC: Oh, my mother always kidding me about changing everything. I was always adding something or doing something.

RE: Did you?

BC: I was just trying to think what all I did. I don't know. It's amazing. It's such a difference because the highway used to be this road, 74. Our smokehouse and everything was in front of that house over there. I moved all that and I moved mama's chickens,

much to her distress. I changed it all. I tore the sheds down. I remember one post that stayed that I never could get up. Every time I'd go by it, I'd shake it.

RE: Did you physically do this, Betty, or did you have somebody doing it?

BC: Oh, I did a lot of it, but I didn't do it all. I mean, I'm not a carpenter, but I know what I want. I just don't know how to get there.

RE: Did you consult with mama before you were moving her chickens and that kind of stuff? Or did you just decide it needed to be done?

BC: Well, I just decided it needed to be done. Her chickens had ruined the backyard. This man came up at Christmas to deliver something and it was like a desert. I couldn't even scratch it with a tiller to plant grass. I said, "Mom, I'm sorry, but this has to go." So, I moved the smokehouse down below where the lake is and I got this old guy that was working with me and we put chicken wire on that high hill and all the way around. No, I did a lot of this myself with help.

RE: Sounds like you're amazing. It's just amazing.

BC: I've got a lake there now, and the hills covered with azaleas, but I bet they're really weedy. I've not been able to... My folks are not too savvy with hard work.

RE: Do you have favorite memories of living in that house? When you think back about the big house, do you have favorite memories of living there?

BC: Oh, I loved it. I loved the old house. I worked on it all the time. It had two upstairs.

RE: Two upstairs?

BC: Yeah. One of them went off the bedroom and it had these quaint little steps and I redid all that. Mom, she thought I was always working, but she always loved it. I went upstairs and redid that whole upstairs and painted it lavender with a white ceiling. I heard her tell this friend of hers, "I want to show you what Betty did." She was always telling somebody that.

RE: When you said you had two upstairs...

BC: There's one on that end with a little stairs, small stairs off the bedroom. It's a big room, just like the lower bedroom. Then the other stairs are on this end.

RE: Do you have photos of that?

BC: No. I've got memories. I don't need photos.

RE: I was thinking, if we could have some so we could share photos.

BC: No, I don't have... No.

RE: You don't have photos of them? Yeah. When you were a little girl, do you have a favorite memory of the house?

BC: Oh, I guess maybe one of the main things is the way the big dining room and the big table when we had holidays.

RE: Tell us about that.

BC: Well, it was just a huge old dining table. Finally, the plaster fell on it. I've still preserved it, but I've never put it back together.

RE: How many people would the dining table seat?

BC: I would say about 10.

RE: It was pretty full?

BC: Oh yeah. It was always full. My mother was a great cook and I learned a lot from her, too. I'm a pretty good cook myself. I can bake 10 cakes at Christmas and decorate them all for parties.

RE: Today, you still do that stuff?

BC: Oh, I couldn't, I don’t think I could do it now. No, but I mean, I have.

RE: Wow, that's pretty big. That's pretty big. Yeah. You said you all did gardening and you had animals, you had livestock. Where did you get your supplies for the animals and for your garden?

BC: When we ended up with cattle and horses and everything, we always had feed delivered. We had what we called a feed room and the old feed room on the first barn, it was pretty small, is still attached to that barn down there.

RE: Where did the feed come from? You said it was delivered?

BC: From Asheville.

RE: From Asheville. That's great. Where did y'all do your trading? Where did you do your business?

BC: We mostly went in town. I can remember when I was real young, how much Dad loved to go to the A&P.

RE: The A&P was where? Where was the A&P?

BC: Huh?

RE: Where was the A&P?

BC: Oh, there were several, different.

SJ: The one I remember's on Biltmore Avenue.

RE: Oh, okay.

BC: That's the main one, wasn't it?

SJ: I don't remember that.

BC: I think it was, yeah.

RE: So, were there no grocery stores in Fairview or he just particularly liked to go?

BC: There weren't many things until Fairview Supply came in, the thing that's still there. It's not the greatest place to shop, but that Dollar General is building across the road.

RE: Okay. So, Fairview Supply.

BC: Dad always liked to go to A&P. He liked the stores and he felt the good prices and all that.

RE: So how did y'all get to the store? Did y'all have a car?

BC: Yeah, I remember the first car. I can still see it was green and black. That strange green that you don't see anymore. It looked pretty though.

RE: That's amazing. So, you said the Fairview Supply, is that where the Dickies is now?

BC: Yeah.

RE: It was called Fairview Supply. What did you get at Fairview Supply?

BC: Oh, everything. They had everything from feed to... Everett Ledbetter, I wonder if he's dead. I bet he is. His wife was very ill. I don't know.

RE: He owned Fairview Supply?

BC: I just haven't kept up. Huh?

SJ: He's dead, I think.

BC: Is he? I just haven't kept up like I should.

SJ: I don't know for sure, but...

BC: Good people. I think you're right.

SJ: The Tickles owned it, too.

BC: I know she was very ill at one point and he was... It's funny how you just get busy and miss the good people that have meant so much.

RE: You talked about your dad driving a car into town. Were the roads good roads? Did you just go on 74A or the Charlotte Highway or what did it look like back in those days?

BC: Well, Charlotte Highway wasn't anything to brag about, but it was paved.

RE: Was it?

BC: It wasn't with gold. Yeah. It was just a little two-lane road. I can remember when I used to cross it so much to go hoe and work in the bottoms.

RE: Oh, wow. So, you were just toting your hoe to go across in the bottoms, huh?

BC: Mm-hmm.

RE: Have you felt safe when you've lived in Fairview since you've been here all your life? Have you felt safe all that time or has that changed?

BC: Without a doubt, I have never been... I am not afraid. I can walk the darkest night or come to the barn or check any animal or do anything that needs to be done. I can talk to anybody that decides they want to affront me.

RE: Well, good, good. Yeah. So, you've felt safe.

BC: No, I'm not afraid.

RE: Good, good. Never felt unsafe.

BC: I'm still... No. It's a great place.

RE: It does seem to be that way. Yeah. Were you all impacted by the wars here?

BC: My father and Uncle Charlie, that lived in the big house over there on the hill, were both in World War I. Yeah, they were in the war. That's how they met and that's how he met mom.

RE: That would've been before you.

BC: Yes.

RE: Was he involved in World War II at all?

BC: No, not really, except the war effort and the things we did.

RE: You were born, you said, in 1930. So, when was the Depression?

SJ: ‘29 because that's when my mama was born.

BC: I sure hope I didn't bring on the depression.

RE: You think you brought it in. Were there community gatherings back in the day with you and your family? Was there anything going on with the community?

BC: Oh yes. We had different things, especially the relatives and everything. Of course, when I got into the horse business right away, we had everybody.

RE: What kind of gatherings did you have?

BC: Well, in that, we would have dinners and celebrate horse shows and everything else. Big time.

RE: When you had these gatherings, were they dress up affairs or...

BC: No, you didn't have to. I always thought you oughta look pretty darn good though, whatever you did.

RE: You had that sense of pride, huh?

BC: Yeah. I don't believe in this sloven, sort of dragging around with... Ridiculous. I think you oughta look as good as you can no matter what it is. If you go and feed the pigs, look as good as you can.

RE: You want to look good for those pigs?

BC: Yeah.

RE: That's great. I love it. I love it.

BC: We didn't raise a lot of pigs, just what my father raised for personal slaughter.

RE: Well, it sounds like you had a whole bunch of properties. So, did your neighbors, did you all help each other as neighbors? Did you rely on each other to help plow the fields or gather your cattle together or anything like that?

BC: Well, they worked a lot. Of course, we had some relatives (laughter) that always needed your help.

RE: You were laughing about that.

BC: Yeah.

RE: Is there a story associated with that?

BC: No, not anymore than just... You need to be available.

RE: Were those same relatives available when you all needed help?

BC: Oh, they were wonderful to us always. Yeah. I have no complaints. Of course, my uncle was very, he was the oldest, that lived over on the hill. He thought he knew best for everybody.

RE: Now, was this your...

BC: Uncle Charlie.

RE: He was your mother's brother?

BC: Oldest brother, yes.

RE: Your mother's brother. He thought he knew everything, huh?

BC: Yeah, until he met me.

RE: What happened when Uncle Charlie met you, Miss Betty?

BC: We just had a few discussions, political and whatever. I would just try to set him straight and try to change him a little bit.

RE: How'd that go over?

BC: I did pretty good.

RE: Did you?

BC: Yeah.

RE: What's the most...

BC: He thought I was pretty great.

RE: What was the big change you made with him?

BC: I don't know what change, but what I love to discuss is politics and why things... I enjoy all that.

RE: Well, are you having a heyday with politics today?

BC: I hate to mention it. With our president, I try not to think about it.

RE: Because?

BC: It's disgusting. He is a disgusting individual. By the way, I heard something right before you came, on TV, that he should have been gotten for, he should have been charged on. What is it? Anyway, I don't think you've heard the end of that. I think this guy is really bad news.

RE: Who was the president? Who's the first president you remember?

BC: Well, the one that I admired so much probably was Franklin Roosevelt.

RE: When did you get politically involved? You said you've always been political.

BC: Well, I'll tell you when I got politically involved, when I sat on the hearth at the big house with Charlie and Daddy discussing politics. I learned how much I liked it.

RE: How about that.

BC: How much I learned to... I wasn't pushy. I might chirp in a few things, but they probably usually agreed with me. Now Charlie was pretty opinionated and I would try to straighten him out once in a while, but he was a little old for me.

RE: Do you remember what President was in office when Charlie and your dad were talking about politics that prompted your interest? Do you remember who was president?

BC: Oh, Franklin Roosevelt.

RE: Oh, it was Roosevelt.

BC: Was one of the main ones. Yeah.

RE: How about that? Now, was Roosevelt President when you were a kid?

BC: Yeah.

RE: Was he? How about that? He left his mark, didn't he?

BC: Yeah.

RE: How about that? That's interesting.

BC: I thought he was wonderful.

RE: So, he gets credit for planting the seed for your political interest.

BC: And all of my future stands.

RE: Love it. I love it. So, what have you liked about... Well, you've loved Fairview and it sounds to me like you just love life, but is there something real special about Fairview to you?

BC: First of all, I thought the school was great and I spent my first grade at... I guess I did have a touch with Fairview Baptist. I went to that little school there on the first grade and the teacher lived there at Kennickells, at the boarding house. I knew that there was

favoritism, but I could always tell by that teacher. I'll never forget her name. Her name was Irene Hawkum. I just thought, oh girl, you don't know nothing yet. You may favor where you're boarding, but I will be a good student and you better take notice.

RE: You were six years old and you were thinking about that?

BC: I was thinking about how that teacher acted. Yeah.

RE: Six years old.

BC: Yeah. Listen, I think I sneaked. I think I started at five. I don't think I was quite six. Yeah.

RE: So where was this boarding house?

BC: Huh?

RE: Where was this boarding house?

BC: Down across from Fairview Baptist, down at the bottom of the road on the opposite side of the street.

RE: What was it called?

BC: I never will forget it. Now I really love the people that live there, the Kennickells. She was in my class and I loved her dearly. She wasn't healthy and she wasn't well. She died very early, but I just never will forget that teacher Irene Hawkum, how she played favorites because she lived at that house. I guess that's natural, but I would never do that to somebody. I would never act like that.

RE: Well, did you show her what for as a first grader?

BC: Huh?

RE: Did you show her what for as a first grader and just do extremely well?

BC: Oh, I certainly did. She tried to pick me, but I was too smart for her. I started at first grade and I think I did it to show her.

RE: Now you mentioned the boarding house. Were there other boarding houses around?

BC: No.

RE: Just that one?

BC: I don't know of any. The Kennickells, they were wonderful people. The little girl went in my class. I think she died very young, maybe while I was away at school or something. I don't recall. I had no complaints with the people.

RE: Now Betty, you've been in Fairview a really long time. What's the biggest change you've seen in Fairview?

BC: Well, of course the major change is growth. I don't know. All that is so gradual when you have all these great teams and you win here and there and yonder and you're just a little school. You know what that means.

SJ: Yeah.

BC: I think that those are the major things, but I was always careful. I always felt very much that you should never be pushy or step on people's toes. I always tried to think of... They don't want to know how much you know. They want to know how much you care.

RE: Bless your heart. Fairview said this biggest thing has been the growth. Do you think it's changed the flavor of Fairview? Do you think the growth has changed the flavor of Fairview?

BC: I don't think it's hurt it. I think we've gotten good people in the growth and everything has helped people and probably helped people make more money that might not have the opportunity. That means a lot, when there's more jobs available. Everybody can't go away to college.

RE: But they can make a contribution, can they not?

BC: Yes.

RE: Yeah, for sure. For sure.

BC: So many people have.

RE: Okay. Do you ever...

BC: Very good people.

RE: I understand there was a Fairview community fair for years here. Do you remember ever going?

BC: I think I went, but I never had a lot of time for that kind of stuff.

RE: Were you a workaholic, Miss Betty?

BC: I think I probably was. Mama always, as I told you, always said, "What do we do next, Fletcher?"

RE: Yeah.

SJ: So, were you in school with Betty Merrill Cunningham?

BC: Oh, my sister married her brother, TC.

SJ: Okay. Who was your sister?

BC: Lucille.

SJ: I didn't know her.

BC: She's older.

SJ: Yeah. Betty goes to church with us.

BC: Does she now?

SJ: Mm-hmm.

BC: Oh, how is she?

SJ: She's doing fine.

BC: Oh good. Tell her hello.

SJ: I will. I will.

BC: She's a very nice person.

SJ: Mm-hmm.

BC: Oh, I haven't thought of her in ages.

RE: See if you talk to Sandra, you're going to know a whole lot of people.

BC: Yeah.

RE: You don't even have to talk about six degrees of separation. It’s more like two or three

BC: Where does she live now?

SJ: On Merrill Road.

BC: Huh?

SJ: She lives on Merrill Road over on [inaudible]

BC: Merrill Road?

SJ: Uh-huh. [inaudible]

BC: She lives around where she used to?

SJ: Yeah.

BC: Oh good. Okay.

SJ: Do you ever go to those class reunions they have?

BC: I don't do that.

SJ: You should because they all have a good time. She's always talked about them. I don't know if she does them anymore.

BC: Oh, I just never had time.

SJ: Well, you should go when they have another one.

BC: I've always been doing something.

RE: Two questions more for you before we wrap up. What keeps you busy today? You sound like you are a real go-getter.

BC: Trying to walk.

RE: Trying to walk.

BC: I've only had this problem for a while and I had surgery on my knee and I'm not sure what they removed, but it must have been part of the walking.

RE: So, if you could walk, what would keep you busy? If you didn't have your health concerns, what would be keeping you busy?

BC: Oh, I can walk with my walker. I had a problem with my phone and they caught me halfway to the other house up there the other day with my walker. I can go anywhere I want to.

RE: So, what keeps you busy?

BC: Oh, my gosh.

RE: Are you being politically active now?

BC: No, not that much, except by talking. That was one of my political people that called me a while ago, his wife.

RE: Okay. The other question I have for you, and this will be my final question, unless we think of something else that needs to be asked, but family, do you still have family in Fairview?

BC: Oh, sure.

RE: Yeah? Who's here?

BC: My niece lives in my house up there. Cindy and Rick and Alex. She's a nurse. A lot of our young people here are nurses. Nobody is living in Ann's house, my sister that died, the one on the hill that you saw with the fence. Melanie, her daughter, lives behind there, and Rod.

RE: Is somebody living in the big house?

BC: No.

RE: No. So, you've got a couple of nieces nearby?

BC: Yes.

RE: Do you have any nephews?

BC: No.

RE: No. Just those two nieces?

BC: Mm-hmm.

RE: Wow.

SJ: So, now I don't know your niece, Melanie, but I do know Rod Kuykendall.

BC: Oh, do you?

SJ: Yeah, he's same age as my daughter. I guess Melanie must be, too. I'm not sure. Yeah, Rod tried to teach my daughter how to drive. So, they were just friends from school and church.

BC: Yeah.

SJ: I'll never forget that.

BC: Yeah. Well, that...

SJ: Poor boy tried.

BC: I don't know though. Rod's a pretty good driver, I guess.

SJ: Yeah, he's a pretty good guy.

BC: Yeah. They live on the hill over there, behind that house that you said that... Ann, that's where they live. Cindy and Rick live up here in this house. Then I have tenants that live in this house right here. Wonderful people.

RE: That's great.

BC: Little autistic boy. Oh, he fixed me something for the other day. He colored within the lines. He's autistic.

RE: Wow.

BC: He's such a beautiful boy.

RE: That's great. That's great.

BC: Oh my God, and the little girl is so sharp and they are so sharp. Wonderful people.

RE: Betty, you think of anything else you want to tell us about Fairview, if you could only tell us one thing?

BC: I don't know, unless you thought of something you wanted to know.

RE: I think I've asked about everything. Sandra...

SJ: I think you have, too.

RE: Do you think of anything that we've missed?

BC: Are you from here, Sandra?

SJ: My family was at the foot of Mine... Minehole Gap is where mine was. My grandmother was a Sales.

BC: Was a what?

SJ: Sales.

BC: Sales.

SJ: So, I'm probably kin to you somewhere.

BC: Oh my gosh. Lot of Sales. Yeah.

RE: Are you related to the Sales?

BC: No. Not that I know of.

RE: Tell us about these peacocks out here.

BC: Aren't they beautiful?

RE: They are. Are they your peacocks?

BC: They're mine. I started off with maybe one or two, but I can get into more things than anybody. Boy, I'm telling you, I couldn't believe this morning how early they talk to you. Not only that, there was two them on the deck before you came.

RE: Were there?

BC: They were fighting. I had put some cat food out there and they were trying to eat and fight and they were running at each other with the beaks wide open. I'd never seen that before in a peacock.

RE: How about that?

BC: It was so wild.

SJ: I think one flew off the porch a minute ago. That's why I've been trying to look out that window every other minute.

BC: That deck goes all the way around.

RE: Well now do you have animals now besides the peacocks?

BC: Oh yeah. I have the most beautiful horse.

RE: Do you?

BC: Yeah. Spirit. He's black and he's beautiful. He's so gorgeous.

RE: Who rides him? Do you ride him?

BC: Nobody's riding him right now. Melanie sort of takes care of him, but I'm going to start going down and...

RE: Talking to him?

BC: Talking to him.

RE: Yeah.

BC: I communicate with my animal spirits.

RE: You talked about putting the cat food out? Do you have a cat?

BC: Oh, there's cats all around here.

RE: You're just feeding the feral cats?

BC: No, they were probably born here, but they live between here and the barn and on the back deck eating. I've got food out there now. Melanie put this little thing across where the peacocks couldn't bother me. I can feed them and they come and communicate with me.

RE: I love it. I love it. You just love life, don't you, Miss Betty?

BC: Well, most of all, I love people because there's so many wonderful people. They make life very special. You know Annie?

SJ: Ager? Yeah.

BC: Do you know her well?

SJ: Pretty good.

BC: Isn't she wonderful?

SJ: I love Annie. Everybody does.

BC: Oh, I love Annie. Annie is my buddy. It's just that I can't ride with her anymore right now. She's always hollering and she's always here. It's a wonder she didn't ride through here while you were here. Oh, no. Well, I guess she may be... Pretty soon, she'll be dealing in the camps and she rides all the... With Annie, she does no wrong with me and my heart. Have you seen Susie [Skinner Clarke Hamilton] lately? Is it bad?

SJ: She's not Susie.

BC: I don't want to see it. I want to ask because I didn't ask the last time I saw her, but I just can't believe that.

SJ: What is it? Alzheimer's?

BC: Yeah, evidently and Will's having to deal with it. Will's such a good guy. It breaks my heart that Elspeth has to come from California to see her mother like that, where she is.

SJ: Yeah. That's a sad disease.

BC: They're my buddies. There's so much of it, isn't there? Haven't we got a lot to be thankful for?

RE: Yes, we do. Yes, we do.

BC: I don't understand how you didn't hear this when I was growing up. Oh, you heard about a few strange people and you tried to figure out if you could help them and why they were strange, but you didn't hear this Alzheimer's stuff.

RE: You think it's because folks are living longer today, Betty? Did they live as long?

SJ: Susie's about my age.

RE: Oh, so it’s early Alzheimer’s.

BC: Well, yeah, because Susie... No, I don't...

SJ: It's early on her.

BC: I just think there's so much of it. I just can't believe it.

SJ: Yeah. Susie...

BC: I just don't understand.

SJ: She's about 70, right? Annie's my age and Susie's just a little older.

BC: Yeah. Do you live in the area?

SJ: I live down near the library.

BC: Oh, you said that. Yeah. Well, they're great people. They're my riding buddies, even though I can't ride anymore. We rode from morning ‘til night and in between.

RE: You are a force to reckon with, woman. I can just tell. We're going to wrap up so we get out of your hair, but this has just been absolutely delightful and we thank you so much for taking part.

BC: Well, you're quite welcome and I've enjoyed talking to you and seeing you.

END OF INTERVIEW.